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Item 37 of the preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 28 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement issued by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the decision of the Government of Israel to approve construction plans for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under item 37 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

* A/52/50.

ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 27 February 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the decision of the Government of Israel to approve construction plans for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim

The European Union deeply deplores the decision of the Government of Israel to approve construction plans for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim, located on the West Bank in the Jerusalem area. The European Union has repeatedly stated that settlements in the occupied territories contravene international law and are a major obstacle to peace.

The European Union once again reaffirms its policy on the status of Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is subject to the principles set out in Security Council resolution 242 (1967), notably the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and is therefore not under Israeli sovereignty. The European Union considers that the Fourth Geneva Convention is fully applicable to East Jerusalem, as it is to other territories under occupation.

The European Union calls on Israel to respect its obligations under international law and to refrain from measures that have an eroding effect on the confidence necessary for the further implementation of the agreements and prejudge the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. The decision is especially regrettable since the signing of the Protocol on Hebron was a positive development that created a new momentum in the peace process and raised hope for further constructive steps in the process.